

FIRST TIME HOME BUYER *guide*



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LICENSED REALTOR®

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR
FIRST HOME!

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HOMESERVICES

AMBASSADOR REAL ESTATE



Intro





Roadmap

TO SUCCESS

A first time homebuyer guide is like a roadmap that helps you on your journey to becoming a homeowner. It's purpose is to:

1. **Guide You:** Just like a map shows you the way, this guide explains the steps to buying a home, making the process less confusing.
2. **Prevent Mistakes:** It helps you avoid common mistakes that first time buyers often make, which can save you money and stress.
3. **Save Money:** By understanding things like mortgages, down payments, and closing costs, you can make smart financial decisions, potentially saving you a lot of money over time.
4. **Boost Confidence:** It gives you the knowledge you need to feel confident in your decisions. Buying a home is a big deal, and this guide empowers you to make informed choices.
5. **Ensure Success:** Ultimately, the goal is to help you successfully purchase your first home and enjoy the benefits of home ownership, like having your own place and building equity over time.

So, think of this guide as your friendly, helpful companion on your journey to owning your first home, making the process smoother and less intimidating.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BUYING YOUR

First Home



Imagine finally having a place to call your own instead of giving all your money to a landlord, and having a space where you can truly be yourself. Buying your first home is a big deal, and here's why it's so significant:

1. **Stability:** It's like having your own piece of the world where you can put down roots and build a life. No more worrying about moving when your lease ends.
2. **Investment:** Your home can be an investment that grows in value over time. It's like saving money while you live there.
3. **Personalization:** You get to decorate and design it your way. Paint the walls, plant a garden, or have a pet – it's your space to make truly yours.
4. **Financial Freedom:** Instead of paying rent to someone else, you're investing in your future. It's like building a financial nest egg, and it can lead to more financial freedom down the road.
5. **Community:** Owning a home often means becoming part of a community. You'll get to know your neighbors, become involved, and have a sense of belonging.
6. **Family & Future:** If you plan to start a family, a home can be a great place to raise kids. It's where you'll make memories and build a future together.

In simple terms, buying your first home is like getting the keys to your own kingdom, where you have control, stability, and the opportunity to create a life that suits you. It's an exciting and significant step towards a brighter future.



Home Buying Steps

- 01 FIND AN AGENT & LEARN HOUSE HUNTING DO'S AND DON'TS
- 02 FINANCIALS
- 03 TOUR HOMES
- 04 MAKE AN OFFER AND NEGOTIATE
- 05 INSPECTION
- 06 APPRAISAL AND LOAN APPROVAL
- 07 UTILITIES
- 08 FINAL WALKTHROUGH
- 09 SCHEDULE YOUR MOVE
- 10 CLOSING



*Find a
Realtor*



Hello!

I'M JAMIE

My mix of people skills, coupled with negotiation and design talents make me a perfect fit for optimizing your buying and selling experience. I have a knack for making things happen. Even more important are the soft skills, I genuinely care about you and your home journey.

My family brings me my greatest joy! My hubby and I have been married for 22 years. He's an entrepreneur and coder. Our oldest Luke, is a freshman at the University of South Dakota. Our middle son Sam, is a Sophomore at Elkhorn North High School. Our youngest Hannah, is a 6th grader at Elkhorn Northridge Middle School. I love being a wife and mom!

As your agent, I have many things to offer you- lender information, buyer's advice, financial resources, market updates, local area knowledge, contract navigation, and much more! My job is to educate clients every step of the way, so you can make the best choice for your future!

You are my top priority as a client- and your interests come first. I am here to listen to your needs and advocate for you in all interactions and negotiations. I am here to be your guide and trusted representative to get you a fair and honest deal.

Real Estate. Real Relationships

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**BERKSHIRE
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REAL ESTATE



Finding a great agent

A real estate agent is a huge asset to you as you go through the home-buying process. This is one of the biggest decisions of your life and you need a skilled professional guiding you through the process.

Your agent will be working with your best interests in mind and can help guide you through all the stages of home buying.



CONNECT YOU WITH THE PERFECT HOME

Agents often have access to information about homes going on the market before the public does and access to off market homes. They can also arrange open houses and tours of homes that match your criteria.

NEIGHBORHOOD KNOWLEDGE

Agents will be able to offer insightful details about the neighborhoods you are considering.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

The process of buying a home requires a good deal of paperwork. Your real estate agent will help you fill out all documents and get them submitted properly.

PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATOR

Agents deal with any difficult conversations that need to happen. They will also help you submit a strong offer and negotiate with the seller on your behalf.

HOUSE HUNTING

Do's

AS YOU START YOUR SEARCH...

MAKE SURE TO SET A BUDGET PRIOR TO SEARCHING

Figure out what you are comfortable with as far as a monthly payment, determine your desired down payment price, save for any future home repairs/ emergencies, and budget for your closing costs.

PICTURES CAN BE DECEIVING

Online property photos don't always show the whole picture and open houses present the best of a home. Make sure you have a trusted agent research the property to make sure you know the status of features not easily seen (HVAC, roof, siding, water heater, electrical, foundation, etc.)

BE REALISTIC WITH YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Before you get too far into your search, make sure you have clarity on your real estate goals and decide if buying a home is the best next step for you. Have a buyer's consultation to begin to understand all the steps of the homebuying process, and have your financing planned and backed up by a local lender.

FIND A GOOD REALTOR

Finding a good realtor is important. Questions you should consider when finding a realtor include- What resources do they offer to help me? Do they listen to me and represent my best interests? Will they make this process easier and clearer for me? Will they be honest about the homes we see and let me make my decisions based on what is best for me at this time?



WHAT NOT TO DO

DURING THE HOME BUYING

process

Remember, buying a home is a significant decision, and these 'don'ts' can help you make a thoughtful and informed choice. Take your time, consider all aspects, and stay within your budget to find the perfect home for you and your future.

- **Don't Rush:** House hunting is like finding the perfect puzzle piece. Take your time and don't rush into a decision. You want to find a home that truly fits your needs and budget, so be patient and explore different options.
- **Don't Ignore the Neighborhood:** Your home isn't just the house; it's also the neighborhood. Don't forget to research the area thoroughly. Consider factors like safety, schools, commute times, and local amenities to ensure it's a good match for your lifestyle.
- **Don't Overspend:** Falling in love with a house can be like falling in love with a designer outfit – it might be tempting to stretch your budget. However, stick to your pre-approved mortgage amount. Overspending can lead to financial stress down the road.
- **Don't Skip the Inspection:** Skipping a home inspection is like buying a car without test-driving it. Always get a professional home inspection to uncover any potential issues. It's a small investment that can save you from costly surprises later on.



Financials





FINANCIALS

After you choose an agent, the next thing to do is plan and understand the financial piece of buying a home. You should also talk to your agent about your financial goals and budget and connect with a local lender to begin your pre-approval process. Read on to take the financial assessment and learn more about each of these financial topics.



*Pre-Approval
Letter & Loans*



*Financial
Assessment*



*Credit score/
Savings*



Associated Costs



*Understanding Your
Future Investments*

PRE *Approval*



Think of pre-approval like getting a golden ticket before entering a theme park. It's an important step in the homebuying process that tells you and sellers that you're a serious and qualified buyer. Here's how it works:

- **Financial Check-Up:** To get pre-approved, you'll provide a lender with information about your finances. This includes your income, debts, and credit history.
- **Evaluation:** The lender carefully reviews your financial information. It's like a doctor checking your health before giving you an all-clear. They'll make sure you can handle a mortgage.
- **Pre-Approval Letter:** If you pass the evaluation, the lender gives you a pre-approval letter. Think of this as your golden ticket. It states the maximum amount you can borrow and the interest rate you might get.
- **Benefits:** Having a pre-approval letter is like having a VIP pass at the theme park. It shows sellers that you're a serious buyer who can afford their home. It can also help you shop for homes within your budget.
- **Time Limit:** Pre-approval isn't forever. It's typically valid for a few months, so you'll want to start shopping for a home during that time.

In simple terms, pre-approval is like a green light from a financial expert that says you're ready to buy a home. It boosts your confidence, helps you know your budget, and makes sellers able to take your offer seriously. It's an essential step in your homebuying journey. Here are some typical documents a lender looks at:

- ✓ TAX RETURNS
- ✓ W - 2 FORMS
- ✓ PAY STUBS
- ✓ BANK STATEMENTS
- ✓ LIST OF MONTHLY DEBT



FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Assessing your financial readiness to buy a home is like checking if you're fully equipped for a big adventure. Here's how a first-time homebuyer can understand and do it:

- **Savings Check:** Imagine you're going on a long trip. Do you have enough money saved up for the journey? In this case, you'll need savings for a down payment and closing costs. Check your savings account to make sure you have enough for these upfront expenses.
- **Budget Review:** Think of your budget as a roadmap for your adventure. Look at your monthly income and expenses. Make sure you have enough left over after bills and other costs to comfortably handle a mortgage payment, property taxes, insurance, and maintenance.
- **Credit Health:** Your credit score is like your passport for this adventure. Just as you need a good passport to travel smoothly, you'll want a good credit score to get a favorable mortgage rate. Check your credit report to make sure it's accurate and work on improving it if needed.
- **Emergency Fund:** Think of this as your safety net. Just like you'd bring a first-aid kit on a trip, you should have an emergency fund to cover unexpected home repairs or financial setbacks. Aim to have a fund that can cover at least three to six months of living expenses.
- **Stability:** Imagine this adventure like a long hike. Do you have stable employment and income? Lenders like to see a steady source of income, so it's a good idea to have a stable job or source of income before buying a home.
- **Debt Check:** Your existing debts are like extra baggage on your journey. Too much debt can make it harder to get a mortgage. Assess your debts and try to reduce them if they're too high.

So, assessing your financial readiness is like making sure you have all the right gear and resources for your homeownership adventure. Just as you'd prepare for a trip, it's essential to prepare your finances for this exciting journey into buying your first home



SAVINGS & CREDIT



When a lender looks at your financial information, they do a hard credit check. (Fair warning that this will make your score temporarily dip!) If you go to more than one lender, your credit will only drop ONCE! Before this happens, try not to make any big credit purchases as this will affect the lender's decision. Here are some tried and true things you can do to prepare yourself financially with credit and savings and get pre-approved for the best price possible:

- You can strengthen your buying power by strengthening your credit score- pay credit cards off earlier than the billing cycle date, try to use under 30% of your max credit limit, and consider becoming an authorized user on a friend or family member with good credit's account to take advantage of their high credit scores.
- Work on lowering your debt to income ratio- pay off any debts you have on time and if possible in full to avoid interest accruing, pay more than the minimum balance each month, seek positions that pay higher or ask for a raise at work to increase income, and decrease the amount of debt you will take out in the future by as much as possible.
- You can build your savings- if you are comfortable with this, you can put your down payment money into a high yield savings account that is FDIC insured. These accounts have a higher interest rate (on average 4%) than if you were to keep it in your basic savings account and it is safer than the stock market because you can never go below the amount you deposit into that account. You can use this link to sign up for a Wealthfront Cash Account and we'll both get +0.50% on the current APY! <https://www.wealthfront.com/c/affiliates/invited/AFFC-ALI7-3VGO-2FZ2>



COST BREAKDOWN



Think of your mortgage payment like a combo meal at your favorite restaurant. It's made up of different parts. Here's what's inside:

- **Principal:** This is the main course. Each month, you're paying back a portion of the amount you borrowed to buy the house.
- **Interest:** This is the seasoning. It's the cost of borrowing money from the bank. You pay this to your lender for the privilege of using their money. In the beginning, most of your payment goes to interest.
- **Taxes:** These are like side dishes. Property taxes are paid to your local government to support community services. Your lender collects these taxes on your behalf and pay them to the government.
- **Insurance:** Think of this as your drink. Homeowners insurance protects your house and belongings from unexpected events like fires or storms.
- **PMI (Private Mortgage Insurance):** If you're required to have it, PMI is like an extra topping on your meal. It's an insurance policy that protects the lender in case you can't make your mortgage payments. It's usually needed if you have a small down payment (under 20%) and if you have an FHA loan.
- **Homeowners Association Fees (HOA):** If you live in a community with shared amenities, like a pool or a park, you might have to pay HOA fees. Consider these like ordering dessert - they're an extra cost if you live in certain neighborhoods.

So, your mortgage payment is like a complete meal - it includes paying back the money you borrowed (principal), the cost of borrowing (interest), property taxes, insurance to protect your home, and any extras like PMI or HOA fees. It's important to understand what's on your plate to budget effectively and enjoy your homeownership journey



COST BREAKDOWN



- Lenders recommend that you spend no more than 3-5 times your annual income on a new home. Your Lender/myself will provide a cost sheet to help you see your down payment & closings costs and your monthly payment.
- Your upfront fees when buying a home are more than just a downpayment. Take a look at all the fees to consider when buying a home:
 - down payment- paid on day of closing
 - closing costs- paid on day of closing
 - survey- optional, paid upfront
 - home warranty- optional, paid at closing
 - home inspection- optional but highly recommended, paid upfront
 - termite inspection- paid at closing table
 - broker fee- covers admin fees and paperwork for brokerage, due at closing
 - earnest deposit- due upfront, applies towards your final bill at closing table
- Your first mortgage payment isn't due until the following month after closing. If you close on Sept 1, you don't have a mortgage payment until Nov. 1st. However, if you close Sep. 30 you still have your mortgage payment starting Nov. 1st. You should try to close earlier in the month so you have longer until you need to pay your first mortgage payment.



YOUR LOAN



When it comes to getting a mortgage, think of it like choosing the right car. There are different types of mortgages, and each has its own features. Here are the main options:

- **Fixed-Rate/ Conventional Mortgage:** This is like a reliable car with a steady monthly payment. With a fixed-rate mortgage, your interest rate stays the same for the entire loan term (usually 15 or 30 years). It's predictable, making budgeting easier.
- **FHA Loan:** Think of this as a mortgage with a lower down payment requirement, like a car with a smaller upfront cost. FHA loans are insured by the government and often require a down payment as low as 3.5%. They're great for buyers with limited savings but come with mortgage insurance costs.
- **VA Loan:** If you're a veteran, a VA loan is like a special benefit for your service. These loans typically require no down payment and have competitive interest rates. It's like getting a special discount on your mortgage.
- **USDA Loan:** This is like a mortgage for rural living. USDA loans are designed for homes in rural areas and often offer low or no down payment options. They're a bit like a green vehicle - good for the environment (rural living) but not available in all areas.
- **Adjustable-Rate Mortgage (ARM):** Imagine an adjustable-rate mortgage like a car with a speed dial. Your interest rate can change periodically (after an initial fixed period). It might start lower than fixed rates, but it can go up or down depending on market conditions. Good if you plan to move or refinance before the rate adjusts.
- **NIFA loan:** this is a second loan, used to cover the down payment and closing costs at a low interest rate and a minimum fee paid by the buyer of \$1,000. This is a Nebraska program to help first time home buyers get into a home, and you can contact your lender to find out more information.

Choosing the right mortgage is like selecting the perfect vehicle for your journey. Consider your budget, how long you plan to stay in the home, and your financial goals to pick the one that suits you best. Just like you test drive a car, explore and compare different mortgage options to find the one that fits your homeownership adventure



YOUR FUTURE

Future Pros of Owning a Home:

- **Equity Buildup:** As you pay your mortgage, you're building equity – that's the part of your home that's truly yours. Over time, this can become a substantial financial asset.
- **Potential for Appreciation:** Over the years, your home may increase in value, allowing you to sell it for more than you paid, which can be a nice financial gain.
- **Tax Benefits:** Owning a home comes with tax advantages. You could deduct mortgage interest and property taxes from your income, potentially reducing your tax bill.
- **Stability in Housing Costs:** Unlike renting, where they can raise the rent, a fixed-rate mortgage means your principal and interest payments stay the same, providing some financial stability.
- **Ownership Flexibility:** You can make improvements to your home, potentially increasing its value. Plus, you have control to personalize your space!

Future Cons of Owning a Home:

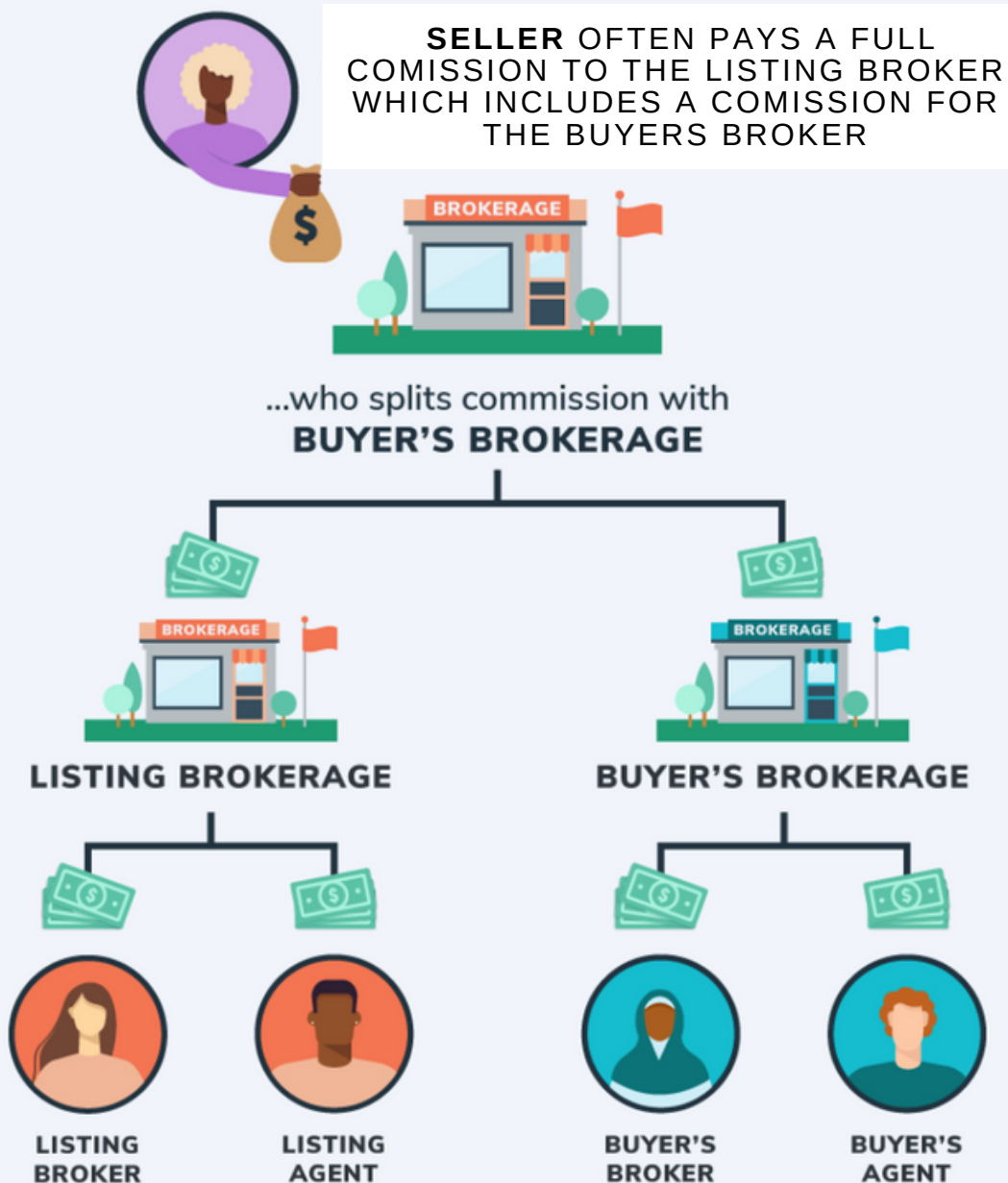
- **Maintenance Costs:** You need to budget for repairs, which could be unexpected and costly.
- **Property Taxes and Insurance:** These are ongoing expenses that can rise over time. You'll need to budget for them, and they can increase your monthly housing costs.
- **Less Moving Flexibility:** Unlike renting, where you can easily move, selling a home can take time and involve costs. This can limit your flexibility if you need to relocate quickly.
- **Initial Costs:** When buying a home, you'll face upfront costs like a down payment, closing costs, and possibly home inspection fees.

In summary, owning a home can be a smart financial move in the long run, offering the potential for equity buildup, tax benefits, and stability. However, it also comes with responsibilities like maintenance and property-related expenses. It's essential to weigh the pros and cons based on your financial goals and lifestyle before making the decision to buy a home

HOW AGENTS TYPICALLY GET PAID IN

Omaha

HOW COMMISSIONS ARE SPLIT:



IF SELLER ELECTS NOT TO PAY THE BUYERS BROKER COMMISSION, BUYER MAY BE RESPONSIBLE TO PAY THE COMMISSION DIRECTLY TO THE BUYERS BROKER

Real Estate Definitions



REAL ESTATE

Terms

PRE-APPROVAL

A pre-approval is an evaluation conducted by the lender to show that the buyer has the funds to purchase up to a certain amount. Getting your pre-approval letter from a local lender is extremely helpful so you can make a strong offer.



OFFER

An agreement between a buyer and a seller to purchase a piece of real estate. This is sometimes referred to as a sales contract.

CONTINGENCY

When an offer is accepted by the seller, but there are certain conditions that must be met before the sale is final.

CLOSING COSTS

The fees that are paid at the end of the purchase by either the buyer, seller or both. These include taxes, insurance and lender expenses.

EARNEST MONEY

Also known as "good faith" money, this is money put up by the buyer into a trust or escrow account. This action shows the buyer is serious about purchasing the home.

TITLE SEARCH

A title search proves that the property is, in fact, owned by the seller. You can also purchase title insurance to make sure that no issues arise later.

APPRAISAL

The appraisal is the value given to a property based on comparable properties that have recently sold. It is done by a professional appraiser. This is typically required by the lender to decide if the requested loan amount is in alignment with the value of the property.

HOME INSPECTION

An inspection is a professional visual examination of the property's condition. Your agent can recommend a qualified home inspector for you.

DISCLOSURES

All seller's are required to fill out a property disclosure stating conditions of the property - good or bad- to the best of their knowledge.

CLOSING

This is the final step of your real estate transaction. At closing, the funds from the buyer are provided to the seller and the buyer receives the keys. This process typically takes an hour.

UNDERSTANDING

Closing Costs

ESCROW CLOSING FEE

The fee charged by the closing agent who prepares the closing documents and closes the loan on behalf of the lender.

UNDERWRITING FEE

Usually included in the application fee- this is the fee for the underwriter on your loan.

DISCOUNT POINTS

Each point is equal to 1% of the mortgage amount. Points are used by the lender to adjust the yield on the mortgage when it is sold to an investor. By paying more points, borrower can obtain a lower mortgage interest rate

FUNDING FEES

Normally applicable on VA loans only, equal to 1% of the loan amount. The fee is due at closing or may be added to the loan amount and financed

HOMEOWNERS INS.

One-year premium is due in advance at time of application or time of closing

MORTGAGE INS.

Insurance required by the lender when the down payment is less than 20%. In the case of loan default, this insurance reduces the lender's loss

RECORDING FEES

The fees that are paid at the end of the purchase by either the buyer, seller or both. These include taxes, insurance and lender expenses.

BROKER FEE

Fee charged by the buyer's agent brokerage for the paperwork and administrative costs- due at closing as part of closing costs owed by buyer.

TITLE INSURANCE

Provides protection for lenders and homeowners against financial loss resulting from legal defects in the title

PRE-PAID ITEMS

Adjustment to escrow accounts from the date of closing, taxes are paid through the end of the month of closing plus the following month. Two months of PMI are collected, two months of homeowner's insurance may be collected. A homeowner's policy must be provided along with a receipt showing that the first year's premium is paid.

GET TO KNOW *The People*

REALTORS

Normally, there are two realtors- one for buyer and one for seller. Your agent represents you, guides you, and speaks on your behalf in negotiations. All communication between parties goes through the realtors.

UNDERWRITER

The underwriter evaluates the risk of lending you money. They review the loan to make sure it looks good and will either approve it or not

TITLE

Title companies will review the property to make sure ownership passes smoothly and provide title insurance to cover any future ownership disputes. They report your new ownership to the county and they host closing.

LOAN OFFICER

This person works with you personally to gather financial information and talk to you about loan options. They send your file to the underwriter for final approval.

SURVEYOR

They will come to the property and conduct a survey. This determines the property boundary lines and that there are no encroachments.

APPRAISER

The appraiser determines the fair market value to make sure the purchase price matches the actual value of the property. A good agent will work with an appraiser to make sure the appraisal is fair.

INSPECTORS

There are many types of inspectors who help find any defects or issues with a home to protect buyers.

TRANSACTION COORDINATOR

A transaction coordinator handles the transactional paperwork, payments and legal compliance.

MOVERS

Movers will help you place and put your furniture in your new home! Make sure to schedule them in advance.

ATTORNEYS

Real estate attorneys make sure the property transfers legally between sellers and buyers.

House Hunting



BE WELL

Informed

- Make a list of all the things you need and want in a new home. Think about how many bedrooms and bathrooms you need.
- Do you want a big kitchen or is a fenced-in yard more important to you?
- When you find THE house, your next step will be to make an offer and go through any negotiations.



Home searching tips.....

- Take photos with your phone while visiting each house. Organize the photos at home with the address of the property so you can remember details later.
- Focus on the things you can't change like the neighborhood, lot or size of bedrooms. Not wall colors.
- Test things as you walk through the home. Open and close windows, turn faucets on and flush toilets to make sure everything is in working order.

HOME TOURING *Checklist*

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

DIS-LIKES: _____

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

DIS-LIKES: _____

HOME TOURING *Checklist*

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

DIS-LIKES: _____

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

DIS-LIKES: _____

HOME TOURING *Checklist*

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

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ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

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HOME TOURING *Checklist*

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

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ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

LIKES: _____

DIS-LIKES: _____

Offer & Negotiation



MAKING AN

Offer

01

YOUR AGENT WILL
LOOK AT COMPARABLE
PROPERTIES

02

YOU & YOUR
REALTOR DECIDE ON
A STRONG OFFER

03

BE READY TO MOVE
FAST- OFFERS OFTEN
HAVE EXPIRATIONS

04

BE FLEXIBLE,
FIRM, AND FAIR IN
NEGOTIATIONS

05

LEAN ON YOUR AGENT TO
HELP NEGOTIATE
COUNTEROFFERS AND TERMS



Remember, an offer is a legally binding document once accepted. If the seller accepts your offer, that means you are legally obligated to purchase that home- you may not keep shopping for homes or back out of the offer unless there are certain contingencies in the offer (such as home inspections) that allow you to do so.



NEGOTIATION

Many times after the initial offer is presented the owner will come back with a counter-offer.

As a buyer, don't be afraid to bargain for what you want. Whether that be cost, a new roof or the whole house painted. You don't know what they're willing to do unless you ask.

Remember to stay calm, stick to your budget, and be prepared to walk away if the terms don't align with your needs.

Negotiation is a skill that improves with practice, so don't worry if it feels tricky at first. With the right information and mindset, you can successfully navigate the negotiation process and secure your first home.



Inspection



INSPECTION *Period*



INSPECTION MEANS PROTECTION

It's always a good idea to add a contingency clause into your offer stating that you have a certain amount of time to have the property inspected. This gives you the right to back out of the agreement if you and the seller can't agree on repairs.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Plan to attend the inspection and be prepared to ask any questions you have.

You will receive a report of findings, but it's sometimes easier to see the issue and hear the information directly from the inspector.

After the inspection is complete, decide if there are any pressing issues you want to negotiate with the seller. Be careful to not be too picky, but also not let major concerns go unaddressed.



INSPECTION

Checklist

Use a checklist like this to make sure that you are looking at all parts of the house. Check off those items that are in good condition and make notes about those that are not. (Note that this list describes an ideal house, but in our experience no house is perfect - not even brand new ones!!)



GROUND

- _____ Proper grading drainage away from house
- _____ No evidence of standing water
- _____ No leaks from septic tank or leech field
- _____ Yard, landscaping, trees and walkways in good condition
- _____ No branches or bushes touching house or overhanging the roof
- _____ Exterior structures
(fences, sheds, decks, retaining walls, detached garages) in good condition, no evidence of termite damage or rotted wood

- _____ Railings on stairs and decks are adequate and secure
- _____ Driveways, sidewalks, patios, entrance landings in good condition, and pitched away from structure
- _____ Downspout drainage directed away from structure

STRUCTURE

- _____ Ridge and fascia board lines appear straight and level
- _____ Sides of house appear straight, not bowed or sagging
- _____ Window and doorframes appear square (especially bowed windows)
- _____ Visible foundation in good condition - appears straight, plumb, with no significant cracks

EXTERIOR SURFACES

- _____ Adequate clearance between ground and wood siding materials (6" minimum); no wood-to-earth contact
- _____ Siding: no cracking, curling, loose, rot or decay
- _____ Masonry veneers: no cracks in joints, no broken, spalling or flaking components
- _____ Stucco: no large cracks (discuss all stucco cracks with a professional inspector)
- _____ Vinyl or aluminum siding: no dents, damage, no bowing or loose siding
- _____ No vines on surface of structure
- _____ Exterior paint or stain: no flaking or blisters
- _____ No stains on exterior surfaces

INSPECTION

Checklist

WINDOWS, DOORS, AND WOOD TRIM

- ____ Wood frames and trim pieces are secure, no cracks, rot or decay
- ____ Joints around frames are caulked
- ____ No broken glass (window or storm panes) or damaged screens, no broken double-paned, insulated window seals
- ____ Muntin and mullion glazing compound in good condition
- ____ Storm windows or thermal glass used
- ____ Drip caps installed over windows

ROOF

- ____ Composition shingles: no curling, no cupping, no loss of granulation particulate, no broken, damaged or missing shingles, no more than two layers of roofing
- ____ Wood shingles or shakes: no mold, rot or decay, no cracked/broken/missing shingles, no curling
- ____ Flat roofs: no obvious patches, no cracks or splits, minimal blisters/"alligatoring" and wrinkles, no silt deposits (indicates improper drainage), sealed tar at flashings
- ____ Flashing around roof penetrations
- ____ No evidence of excess roofing cement/tar/caulk
- ____ Soffits and fascia: no decay, no stains
- ____ Exterior venting for eave areas: vents are clean and not painted over
- ____ Gutters: no decay or rust, joints sealed, attached securely to structure, no bending or sagging, no sections of gutter or downspout missing, gutters clean, no mud deposits
- ____ Chimneys: straight, properly flashed, no evidence of damaged bricks or cracked joints, mortar/cement cap in good condition

ATTIC

- ____ No stains on underside of roofing, especially around roof penetrations
- ____ No evidence of decay or damage to structure
- ____ Sufficient insulation and properly installed insulation (moisture barrier installed closest to the heated area of the house)
- ____ Adequate ventilation, clear path into attic for air entering through soffit vents, adequately sized gable end louvers, all mechanical ventilation operational
- ____ No plumbing, exhaust or appliance vents terminating in attic
- ____ No open electrical splices



INSPECTION

Checklist

BATHROOMS

- _____ Working exhaust fan that doesn't terminate in the attic space
- _____ Adequate flow and pressure at all fixtures
- _____ Sink, tub and shower drain properly
- _____ Plumbing and cabinet floor under sink in good condition
- _____ If sink is metal, it shows no signs of rust, overflow drain doesn't leak
- _____ Toilet operates properly
- _____ Toilet stable, no rocking, no stains around base
- _____ Caulking in good condition inside and outside of the tub and shower area
- _____ Tub or shower tiles secure, wall surface solid
- _____ No stains or evidence of past leaking around base of bath or shower

MISCELLANEOUS

- _____ Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors where required by local ordinances
- _____ Stairway treads and risers solid
- _____ Stair handrails where needed and in good condition
- _____ Automatic garage door opener operates properly, stops properly for obstacles

BASEMENT/MECHANICAL ROOM

- _____ No evidence of moisture
- _____ Exposed foundation; no stains no major cracks, no flaking, no efflorescence
- _____ Visible structural wood: no sagging, no damage, no decay, no stains, no damage from insects, sills attached to foundation with anchor bolts
- _____ Insulation at rim/band joists



INSPECTION

Checklist

CRAWL SPACE

- _____ Adequately vented to exterior
- _____ Insulation on exposed water supply, waste and vent pipes
- _____ Insulation between crawl space and heated areas, installed with vapor barrier towards heated area
- _____ No evidence of insect damage
- _____ No evidence of moisture damage

PLUMBING

- _____ Visible pipes: no damage, no evidence of leaks, no signs of stains on materials near pipes; drain pipes slope slightly down towards outlet to septic/sewage system
- _____ Water heater: no signs of rust, vented properly, sized to produce adequate quantities of hot water for the number of bedrooms in the house
- _____ Water pump: does not short cycle
- _____ Galvanized pipes do not restrict water flow
- _____ Well water test is acceptable
- _____ Hot water temperature between 118 - 125 degrees Fahrenheit

ELECTRICAL

- _____ Visible wiring: in good condition, no "knob-and-tube" wiring, no exposed splices, cables secured and protected
- _____ Service panel: adequate capacity, all cables attached to panel with cable connectors; fuses or breakers are not overheating
- _____ No aluminum cable for branch circuits

HEATING/COOLING SYSTEM

- _____ Appears to operate well throughout (good air flow on forced hot air systems)
- _____ Flues: no open seams, slopes up to chimney connection
- _____ No rust around cooling unit
- _____ No combustion gas odor
- _____ Air filter(s) clean
- _____ Ductwork in good condition
- _____ No asbestos on heating pipes, water pipes or air ducts
- _____ Separate flues for gas/oil/propane and wood/coal

INSPECTION

Checklist

INTERIOR ROOMS

- _____ Floors, walls and ceilings appear straight and plumb and level
- _____ No stains on floors, walls or ceilings
- _____ Flooring materials in good condition
- _____ No significant cracks in walls or ceilings
- _____ Windows and exterior doors operate easily and latch properly, no broken glass, no sashes painted shut, no decay; windows and doors have weather-stripping, "weep holes" installed
- _____ Interior doors operate easily and latch properly, no damage or decay, no broken hardware
- _____ Paint, wall covering, and paneling in good condition
- _____ Wood trim installed well and in good condition
- _____ Lights and switches operate properly
- _____ Adequate number of three pronged electrical outlets in each room
- _____ Electrical outlets test properly (spot check)
- _____ Heating/cooling source in each habitable room
- _____ Evidence of adequate insulation in walls
- _____ Fireplace: no cracking or damaged masonry, no evidence of back-drafting (staining on fireplace façade), damper operates properly, flue has been cleaned, flue is lined

KITCHEN

- _____ Working exhaust fan that is vented to the exterior of the building
- _____ Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter ("GFCI") protection for electrical outlets within 6 feet of the sink(s)
- _____ Dishwasher: drains properly, no leaks, baskets, door spring operates properly
- _____ No leaks in pipes under sinks
- _____ Floor in cabinet under sink solid, no stains or decay
- _____ Water flow in sink adequate
- _____ No excessive rust or deterioration on garbage disposal or waste pipes
- _____ Built-in appliances operate properly
- _____ Cabinets in good condition: doors and drawers operate properly

PLEASE NOTE: THIS CHECKLIST SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON AS A HOME INSPECTION REPORT, NOR SHOULD IT BE CONSIDERED A SUBSTITUTE FOR A HOME INSPECTION. THIS LIST IS REPRESENTATIVE, BUT NOT EXHAUSTIVE.



Appraisal & Approval



UNDERSTANDING

appraisals

Your lender will require an appraisal of the home before finalizing the loan. This ensures that the home you want is fairly priced and they are not giving money away to an overpriced home. It helps protect your investment and their loan from unfair pricing tactics.

01

Your realtor is important here- they should research properties in the area and the property you want to buy and determine if it's listing price is fair. They will do a comparative market analysis and try to get as close as they can to what an appraiser might determine as fair market value. They can also work with the appraiser and provide important information as to why the home is priced the way it is.

02

The home appraiser will take into account comparable homes that have sold in the neighborhood, the current market, the home's age and condition, etc. They will use that knowledge plus the information presented by a realtor to determine the fair market value of a home. Appraisals are often done before your loan is approved. The price the appraiser comes up with will be taken into account when they approve your loan.

03

The goal is for the home to appraise as close as possible to the purchase price. If it appraises **OVER** that price, that means the seller listed it too low and will lose money. If it appraises **UNDER** the price, that is bad for a buyer because then the lender will not cover the difference and often the buyer would have to cover it out of their own pocket- which sometimes leads to them losing on a home that was not priced well.



A modern kitchen with white marble countertops, dark grey cabinets, and stainless steel appliances including a refrigerator, oven, and gas cooktop. A white marble island is in the foreground.

LOAN *Approval*

Once any appraisal-related issues are resolved and the lender is satisfied that the property's value aligns with the loan amount, they will provide you with the final loan approval.

This is a significant milestone, indicating that the lender is ready to provide the funds you need to purchase your first home. It's important to remember that this approval doesn't require further negotiations or financial evaluations; it means you're on track to close the deal and become a homeowner.

The loan is only fully complete after the lender approves the loan. You will receive a final approval letter after they review your income, credit report and employment status once more.

Home owners insurance is also required before the mortgage company will finalize the loan.



Utilities &
Walkthrough

SET UP

Utilities



TIME PERIOD

"Approximately 2 weeks prior to closing, please contact your new Utility, Gas, Water, Trash and Cable Companies and set these up in your name for the day of closing. Anyone who needs access to your home will have to wait until after you close.

UTILITY COMPANY CONTACTS

Electric

OPPD

(402)536-4131

www.oppd.com

Gas/Water/Sewer

MUD

(402)554-6666

www.mudomaha.com

Black Hills Energy

(888) 890-555

www.blackhillsenergy.com/

Papillion Water

(402) 8271677

www.papillion.org/water_sewer_billing.cfm

Cable/Internet/Phone

Cox New (402) 505-8080 www.cox.net

Existing (402) 933-3000

Century Link 1 (800) 244-1111

www.centurylink.com

Trash Companies:

These are some common companies used, there are more if you choose to go another route.

Papillion Sanitation:

402-346-7800

<https://papillion-sanitation.com>

Abes Trash Service: 402-468-5434

<https://www.abestrash.com>



FINAL Walkthrough

There will be a walk-through of your new home 1-3 days prior to closing. At the walk through our duty is to ensure that the house is still in the same condition as when we put an offer on the house and all items, if any, that we asked to be fixed are complete. If there is anything not to your satisfaction, please speak up so we can get it handled prior to closing.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ___ Stove/Oven | ___ Exhaust Fan(s) |
| ___ Disposal | ___ Furnace |
| ___ Dishwasher | ___ Air Conditioner |
| ___ Microwave | ___ Hot Water Heater |
| ___ Refrigerator | ___ Garage Door Opener(s) |
| ___ Freezer | ___ Smoke/Carbon Detectors |
| ___ Washer/Dryer | ___ Roof |
| ___ Ceiling Fan(s) | ___ Outdoor Shed |
| ___ Electrical (All lights-Ext&Int) | ___ Window |
| ___ Plumbing | Coverings/Operables |
| (All faucets/showers & toilets) | ___ Agreed upon personal property |

Howing &
Closing



SCHEDULE YOUR

Move



You will want to get movers scheduled as soon as possible.

It would be nice to avoid scheduling the move and closing on the same day but this isn't always possible. You will get the key to your new home at the closing. If you will be doing renovations, start getting quotes from contractors.

Closing

Closing is the final step for you to become the legal owner of your home. You will take a final walk-through just before closing to assure that negotiated work has been completed and everything is in working order.

The closing process itself requires a lot of paperwork and patience. Be prepared with your government issued photo ID, cashier's check and any other documents required by the title company or loan officer.

Don't forget to re-key all the locks and change the garage door opener code when the property is officially yours.

Moving checklist

Prep in Advance

- ☐ Make a moving budget
- ☐ Book truck/ movers
- ☐ Make an inventory of everything you need to move
- ☐ Invest in packing supplies- boxes, bubble wrap, packing tape, and markers for labeling
- ☐ Create "to throw away," "to donate," and "to sell" boxes
- ☐ Take the trip to landfill and donation centers
- ☐ Gather important documents- passports, mortgage papers, insurance, medical records and put them in a safe place
- ☐ Arrange childcare/ pet care for moving day
- ☐ Get the keys for the new home
- ☐ Transfer medical records and refill any prescriptions
- ☐ Change your address with an official mail forwarding form- notify banks, insurance, and subscription services
- ☐ Start, stop, and transfer utility services
- ☐ Get school records and register at new schools
- ☐ Plan for moving vehicles, pets, and plants
- ☐ Dispose of hazardous and flammable items
- ☐ Measure furniture for placement
- ☐ Notify friends, family, neighbors, and your job of new address
- ☐ Plan your travel route if needed
- ☐ Do not buy tons of new furniture, decor, and organizing items before the move- wait until after so you can get a feel for the space!

Pack overnight bag

Pack an overnight bag with the essentials:

- ☐ toiletries
- ☐ towels
- ☐ medications
- ☐ toilet paper
- ☐ pet food
- ☐ snacks
- ☐ electronics
- ☐ important documents
- ☐ cash and valuables
- ☐ clothing

Make an open 1st box

- ☐ Cleaning supplies
- ☐ light bulbs
- ☐ basic tools
- ☐ basic kitchen utensils
- ☐ Kitchen appliances
- ☐ hand soap
- ☐ bedding
- ☐ Food/ perishables
- ☐ kids toys
- ☐ Pet supplies
- ☐ Jackets/ clothing
- ☐ Remotes/ other electronics

On Moving Day

- ☐ Have a plan for arrival times
- ☐ Protect floors and carpet
- ☐ Make sure all boxes are labeled accurately
- ☐ Do a final clean and disposal
- ☐ Final home walkthrough before leaving
- ☐ Leave owner manual and household receipts
- ☐ Leave labeled keys and garage door fobs
- ☐ Lock doors, windows, and turn off all switches
- ☐ Make sure you leave the yard and driveway in good condition/ cleared off

Packing Up Early

- ☐ Pack less used items first- fine dish ware, specialty cooking appliances, seasonal items, decor and books
- ☐ Take another tour of your new place if you can to determine if you need to downsize- take photos and measure spaces and begin to plan where items will go
- ☐ Invite friends to help you pack up more less used items- excess clothing, linens, toiletries, and tools
- ☐ Label boxes with the room they go to and write some of the important items inside for reference
- ☐ Clean out your pantry and old food
- ☐ Clean up your backyard and garage

Packing at the end

- ☐ Begin a room by room packing tour of your house each day on the final week of your move
- ☐ Call the movers and double check your appointment
- ☐ On the day before, get boxes ready and labeled with the items that will go in them the next day (bedding, toiletries, food, electronics, etc.)
- ☐ Vacuum, mop, and wipe down your house the final few days
- ☐ Try not to buy lots of food and get rid of as much as you can
- ☐ Make a list of items to go in your open first box and in your overnight bag
- ☐ Pack your open first box the morning of
- ☐ Pack your overnight bag the morning of

After you move

- ☐ Paint and do any renovations BEFORE you unpack everything
- ☐ Unpack your overnight bag the day of and open first box when you can
- ☐ Put any necessary food/ drinks in the fridge and pantry
- ☐ Vacuum, mop, and wipe down everything BEFORE you unpack
- ☐ Finish any address changes you may need- government, drivers license, doctor, dental, cell phone
- ☐ Make sure your utilities and services were connected correctly
- ☐ Change locks on the new home
- ☐ Schedule any needed maintenance
- ☐ Save all moving receipts and documents and store safely
- ☐ Go grocery shopping
- ☐ Buy new furniture, decor, and items after a week so you can get used to the space first
- ☐ Unpack by room and continue to declutter

[illegible]



Jamie Hunsberger

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HOMESERVICES REALTOR

Thank you for giving me the
opportunity to earn your
business and help you find a
home you love.

Jamie Hunsberger



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